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Gregory, Waylande De Santis (1905-1971), Collection 1923-1988

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#12 Gregory, Waylande De Santis (1905-1971), Collection 1923-1988
.4 linear feet

INTRODUCTION

Correspondence, writings, photographs, and collected biographical and research materials of a noted ceramist and artist. Includes original documents and research materials collected by Pittsburg State University curator Eugene DeGruson.

DONOR INFORMATION

Most of the materials in the Waylande De Santis Gregory, Collection, were compiled by Eugene DeGruson during the period from 1975 to 1982. The donor of the original Gregory correspondence is unknown.

BIOLOGICAL SKETCH

Waylande De Santis Gregory was born in Baxter Springs, Kansas, on June 13, 1905. His family operated a hardware store and raised horses on a ranch five miles away in Oklahoma. In 1913 Mrs. Gregory moved with her three sons to Pittsburg, Kansas, in order to take advantage of better educational opportunities. Waylande Gregory was enrolled in the laboratory grade school at the State Manual Training Normal, now Pittsburg State University, where he was instructed by supervised student teachers and by faculty of the College. A precocious artist, Gregory became the protégé of Lyle Brower, the head of the art department and professor of drawing and design, and Elsie Bowman, a 1903 graduate of the Chicago Art Institute.

Gregory completed his college course work at Pittsburg by June 1922 then enrolled in the Kansas City Art Institute. Within a few months Gregory accepted a position with the McCartney Ornamental Plastering Company through the auspices of Lyle Brower. Though still very young, Gregory was soon assigned his first major project: the design and casting of architectural ornaments for Strong Hall, the administration building at the University of Kansas. Gregory next found his way to the Chicago Art Institute where he came under the influence of historian-sculptor Loreda Taft and began to work in marble, bronze, and ceramics.

Ceramics became Gregory's primary medium. He apprenticed himself to the Midland Terra Cotta Company in Cicero, Illinois, and then enrolled at the University of Kansas City to study chemistry, geology, and mineralogy. Before embarking on his career as a ceramic sculptor, however, in 1928 he went as artist-designer to the Cowan Art Pottery Studio in Rocky River, Ohio. When the Cowan Studio closed in December 1931 Gregory went to the Cranbrook Academy of Art as a fellow in residence. There he experimented with coloring clay by means of minerals. In 1932 he established his own studio in Bound Brook, New Jersey, and turned his attention to creating ton-size, ceramic statuary.

In addition to his many commissioned works and exhibitions, Gregory was busy lecturing and writing. He was a frequent contributor to art journals and for a time wrote a newspaper column titled "Art in Living". He also appeared in twenty episodes of "Creative Arts" for the National Broadcasting Company. Gregory is best known today for his large ceramic works, including "Fountain of Atoms" commissioned for the 1939 World's Fair in New York, and "Democracy in Action", a sculptured ceramic relief on the Municipal Center in Washington, D.C., that is over 80 feet long and 8 feet high, containing more than 50 life-size figures in color.

Gregory married Yolande Von Wagner in April 1930. She survived him when he passed away on August 18, 1971.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The materials in the Waylande Gregory Collection provide a limited view of his life and career as a ceramic sculptor. The collection includes a few family letters from Waylande Gregory and original copies of some of his articles and columns. Many of the items are photocopies and copies of research materials and biographical information compiled or written by Gene DeGruson, former curator of special collections at Pittsburg State University.

Much of the correspondence consists of letters between Gene DeGruson, Yolande Gregory, and Lee Nordness in 1975 and 1976 when the city of Pittsburg attempted, unsuccessfully, to obtain the bulk of Gregory's sculpture and personal archives.

The Collection is arranged in seven series: **Biographical Sketches, Correspondence, Writings, Clippings, Articles and Research Files, Photographs, and Miscellaneous.**

The **Biographical Sketches** series contains copies of the entries for Waylande Gregory taken from Who's Who in American Art, and the National Cyclopedia of American Biography.

The **Correspondence** series contains one folder of letters from Waylande Gregory to family members and notes written in his hand on photocopies. They date from 1955 to 1970. Gregory mentions family news and ancestry, the effect of imported ceramic handicrafts on his business, and he notes his impression of the 1962 parade in New York that honored astronaut John Glenn.

There are two folders of correspondence by Yolande Gregory. Included is a letter to Edward Winter defending the reputation of Waylande Gregory's artistic contributions. Most of this correspondence is with Gene DeGruson regarding the disposition of the Gregory sculpture and archives.

The bulk of the remaining correspondence is with Lee Nordness, agent for Yolande Gregory, regarding the Gregory sculptures and attempts to raise funds to purchase the collection for the city of Pittsburg. Other correspondence includes a letter from Gregory's classmate in Pittsburg, Frank McFarland, and correspondence with researcher Bianca Brown.

The **Writings** series includes photocopies and original clippings of Gregory's articles and his newspaper column titled "Art in Living". Included are articles from 1936 and 1941 and the column that was written in 1961 and 1962. Undated articles are arranged in the last folder of this series.

The **Clippings** series is arranged in chronological order with undated materials at the end. Included are newspaper and magazine clippings that refer to Gregory's life, art works, exhibits, influence on the artistic world, and similar topics.

The **Articles and Research Files** series consists of secondary information written or compiled by Gene DeGruson and other researchers. This series contains manuscripts accompanied sometimes by editorial correspondence and photographs used as illustrations. Included is a draft of four chapters of a history of the Cowan Pottery Studio by Mark Bassett and a large collection of color photographs of Gregory's sculptures compiled by Bianca Brown. Also included are copies of exhibit catalogues, Gregory's academic records at Pittsburg, genealogical records, listings for Gregory from Art Index, articles on ceramic tiles used for space flight, and miscellaneous items.

The **Photographs** series contains a photograph of Gregory in the Aztec Room of the Presidential Hotel in Kansas City, Missouri; a group photograph of the Gregory family taken on a fishing trip at Grand Lake, Oklahoma; a view of a 1933 classroom at Pittsburg State University

showing one of Gregory's early sculptures; and several of Gregory's works. Also included are two unidentified portraits, perhaps family members.

The **Miscellaneous** series contains promotional brochures for Gregory's art works and studio, and the text for a slide presentation of Gregory's work. Information in the correspondence series suggests the slides were returned to Yolande Gregory.

FOLDER LIST

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Correspondence Series

f. 2 Waylande Gregory, 1955-1970, undated
f. 3 Yolande Gregory, 1971-1972
f. 4 Yolande Gregory, 1975-1980
f. 5-10 Miscellaneous, 1975-1982

Writings Series

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f. 14 1962
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f. 20 1944
f. 21 1947-1961
f. 22 1967-1975
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f. 24 1984-1988
f. 25 Undated

Articles and Research Files Series

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f. 27 "No Greater Ecstasy: Waylande Gregory and the Art of Ceramic Sculpture"
f. 28 "Waylande Gregory: Sculptor of the Brandenburg Field Bas Relief"
f. 29 "Cowan Pottery"
f. 30 "Artworks of Waylande Gregory"
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